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Gentleness, O People of the Sunnah, **With the People of the Sunnah**

By: 'Abdul-Muhsin bin Ḥamad al-'Abbād al-Badr

Translated by: Aboo Ishaaq Rasheed Gonzales

First Edition, 1424H/2003CE
Second Edition, 1429H/2008CE

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Typeset by: Aboo Ishaaq Rasheed Gonzales

Published by: The Qur'an & Sunnah Society of Canada
1865B Lawrence Ave. East
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M1R 2Y3

Tel: 416-751-9921
Fax: 416-751-9926
Internet: www.qssc.org
Email: admin@qssc.org



Translator's Foreword

The praise is for Allah. We praise Him, we seek aid from Him, and we seek forgiveness from Him. We seek refuge with Allah from the evils of our souls and the misdeeds of our deeds. Whoever Allah guides, then there is no misguidance for him and whoever He leaves astray, then there is no guide for him.

I testify that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah alone. He has no partner. And I testify that Muḥammad is His servant and His messenger.

As for what follows, then indeed the truest of speech is the Book of Allah and the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad ṛ. The vilest of affairs are their innovations. Every innovation is a heresy, every heresy is misguidance, and all misguidance is in the Fire.

The treatise before you is a translation of the second edition of the highly beneficial advice, *Rifqan Ahl as-Sunnah bi Ahl as-Sunnah*,¹ written by the noble shaikh, Abū 'Abdir-Razzâq 'Abdul-Muḥsin bin Ḥamad al-'Abbâd al-Badr. The book was written as a much needed and timely advice directed to the People of the Sunnah of this era due to some of the division and differing that has occurred within their ranks. In this second edition, he has added a new introduction addressing some issues that were raised when the book's first edition was published and distributed. He also added the last two chapters of his follow up to *Rifqan Ahl as-Sunnah*, titled *al-Ḥath 'alâ Ittibâ' as-Sunnah wat-Taḥdhîr min al-Bida' wa Bayân Khaṭarihâ*, to the end of this edition.

In this translation of mine, I have tried to stay as true to the original Arabic text as I could, adding certain things in brackets [] to facilitate an understanding of what is being said. I have provided references to the Qur'anic verses quoted as the shaikh normally does not mention them in his works. I have also added my own footnotes in various places to aid the reader with understanding certain terms or expressions used by the shaikh. I have indicated these footnotes prefixing them with the symbol [t]. In cases where a footnote includes comments both from me

¹ [t] al-Badr, 'Abdul-Muḥsin bin Ḥamad. *Rifqan Ahl as-Sunnah bi Ahl as-Sunnah* (2nd ed). Riyâd, 1426H.

and from the shaikh, I have indicated his comments with the symbol [a]. All other footnotes throughout this work belong to the shaikh, may Allah preserve and protect him. All references made throughout the book refer to the original Arabic works.

Aboo Ishaaq Rasheed Gonzales
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
QSS Canada Editorial Staff
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Introduction to the Second Edition²

The praise is for Allah. May Allah send salutations, peace, and blessing upon our Prophet Muḥammad, upon his family, his Companions and whoever was a supporter of his, held to his sunnah, and was guided by his guidance, until the Day of Reward.³

As for what follows, then a few years prior (after the death of our venerable shaikh,⁴ Shaikh of Islam 'Abdul-'Azîz bin 'Abdillāh bin Bâz, in 1420H and the death of the shaikh, 'Allāmah⁵ Muḥammad bin Ṣāliḥ bin 'Uthaimîn, in 1421H V), division and separation occurred between some of the People of the Sunnah. It resulted from some of them undertaking the pursuit of errors [by] some of their brothers from the People of the Sunnah then cautioning against them,⁶ while those they incriminated countered their speech with its like. The spreading of this division's tribulation was assisted by the ease of obtaining these incriminations, cautionings, and what countered them, from internet information (in which all [those] whose slander was desired were slandered at any time of the night or day). So all of those who desired it seized it and because of that, the rift of the division and separation was widened and everyone took sides with whomever and whatever delighted them from the individuals and the speech. The matter did not stop with the incrimination of whoever was incriminated from the People of the Sunnah. Rather, that passed on to some of those who did not support that incrimination. In the beginning of 1424H, I wrote a

² [t] This heading is not found in the original text and was added to distinguish between the first and second introductions to the book.

³ [t] Ar. yawm ad-dîn – lit. the Day of Reward (also Ar. yawm al-jazâ'). See *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥîṭ*. It refers to Judgement day, which is also referred to as the Last Day (Ar. yawm al-âkhir) and the Day of Standing (Ar. yawm al-qiyâmah); the day when all of mankind will stand before their Lord to be judged.

⁴ [t] Ar. shaikh – elder, chief. It is an honorific given to religious scholars, teachers and elders.

⁵ [t] Ar. 'allāmah – great scholar, extremely learned. It is an honorific given to scholars of vast knowledge.

⁶ [t] I.e., their brothers.

treatise of advice regarding this topic with the title *Rifqan Ahl as-Sunnah bi Ahl as-Sunnah*.⁷ In its introduction I said [that]

[t]here is no doubt that the obligation upon the People of the Sunnah in every time and place is mutual affection, compassion in what is between them, and cooperation upon reverence⁸ and godliness.⁹

Surely from what one regrets in this time is what occurred of alienation and differing from some of the People of the Sunnah; from what was caused by some of them being occupied with disparaging, cautioning [against], and boycotting others. The obligation was that their efforts be collectively directed at others from the disbelievers and the People of Heresies hostile to the People of the Sunnah; that they be mutually affectionate and compassionate with regards to what is between them, mentioning one another with gentleness and lenience.

After the publication of this treatise, individuals from the People of the Sunnah objected to it—may Allah pardon us and them—and I pointed that out in what I wrote at the end of the treatise *al-Hath 'alâ Ittibâ' as-Sunnah wat-Taḥdhîr min al-Bida' wa Bayân Khaṭarihâ*.¹⁰ At the forefront of these [individuals] who objected to this treatise were those from whom I sought gentleness with their brothers from the People of the Sunnah. By “the People of the Sunnah” in [the title] *Rifqan Ahl as-Sunnah bi Ahl as-Sunnah* I did not mean the sects and parties deviating from what the People of the Sunnah are upon; such as those whose party arose from al-Manṣūrah in Egypt;¹¹ such as the squatters in London who wage war against the People of the Sunnah by

⁷ [t] I.e., *Gentleness, [O] People of the Sunnah, with the People of the Sunnah*.

⁸ [t] Ar. birr – reverence, piety; righteousness, probity; godliness, devoutness; kindness.

⁹ [t] Ar. taqwâ – godliness, devoutness, piety, reverence.

¹⁰ [t] I.e., *Urging Adherence to the Sunnah, Cautioning from the Heresies, and the Clarification of Their Significance*. See the last two chapters of this translation.

¹¹ [t] This footnote, along with footnotes nos. 11i, 11ii, 12, and 13 were originally part of the main text of the treatise. I have made them into footnotes to help the text’s flow and readability in English. [a] Addressing his followers, this party’s founder said, “Thus your call is more deserving of [having] the people come to it and not coming to anyone ... since it is comprised of every good, while others are not free from deficiency.”¹¹ He also said,

Our position on the various calls which prevailed in this era, divided the hearts and troubled the thoughts is that we weigh them by the scale of our call. Thus, whatever agrees with it, then welcome! And whatever differs with it, then we are free of it. We believe that our call is universal and does not leave a righteous part of any call except that it touches on it briefly and points it out!!!¹¹ⁱ

This speech necessitates that they welcome the Râfiḍî if he agrees with them and that they free themselves from those who differ with them, even if they were Sunnîs upon the way of the Predecessors. [t] Here the shaikh is speaking of the Muslim Brotherhood (Ar. al-ikhwân al-muslimûn – lit. the Muslim brothers).

¹¹ⁱ al-Bannâ, Shaikh Ḥasan. *Mudhakkirât ad-Da'wah wad-Dâ'iyyah*. Dâr ash-Shihâb. pg. 232.

¹¹ⁱⁱ al-Bannâ, Shaikh Ḥasan. *Majmū'ah Risâ'il Ḥasan al-Bannâ*. Dâr ad-Da'wah, 1411H. pg. 240.

what they spread in their magazine, which they have called *as-Sunnah*,¹² and such as those whose call arose from Delhi in India.¹³

I surely emphasized the counsel to the youth of the People of the Sunnah in this introduction to be concerned with being occupied with knowledge; to occupy their times with its acquisition in order that they seize profit and be safe from the cheating that was mentioned in the Messenger's ﷺ statement, «Two blessings which many of the people are cheated of: health and spare time.»¹⁴ From the most important books of the contemporary scholars that they should be concerned with reading are: *Majmū' al-Fatâwâ* of our shaikh, the imam¹⁵ of the People of the Sunnah during his time, Shaikh 'Abdul-'Azîz bin 'Abdillâh bin Bâz ﷺ; the *Fatâwâ* of the [Saudi Arabian] Permanent Committee for Academic Researches and Verdicts; the writings of our shaikh, the 'allamah, Shaikh Muḥammad al-Amîn ash-Shinqîṭî ﷺ—especially *Aḍwâ' al-Bayân fî Îḍâḥ al-Qur'ân bil-Qur'ân*; and the writings of the two formidable scholars, Shaikh Muḥammad bin Ṣâliḥ al-'Uthaimîn and Shaikh Muḥammad Nâsir ad-Dîn al-Albânî ﷺ.

I also advise the students of knowledge in every land to benefit from those occupied with knowledge from the People of the Sunnah in that land; like Shaikh al-Albânî's pupils in Jordan who established a centre after him in his name,¹⁶ like Shaikh Muḥammad al-Maghrawî in Morocco, Shaikh Muḥammad 'Alî Farkûs and Shaikh al-'Îd Sharîfî in Algeria, and others from the People of the Sunnah. From the advice to the People of the Sunnah is that whoever of them erred should be notified of his error, not pursued for it. Innocence from him should not be declared because of that and benefit should be sought from him, especially if no one is found who is more prominent in knowledge and virtue than he.

I advise the youth to be cautioned against being occupied with following the stumblings of the students of knowledge and following the internet sites concerned with gathering their slips and cautioning against them because of [these slips]. Shaikh Muḥammad bin Sulaimân al-Ashqar had erred slanderously in the derogation of the companion Abî Bakrah ﷺ and his narrations, and

¹² From that is their derogation of the scholars of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and their describing the callers who are like them in it as liberals due to their display of opposition and derogation of the scholars, especially the [ones in] authority amongst them!! And one of the distinguished [scholars] has written a treatise titled, *Mujallah as-Sunnah???*, in which he gathered a sum of that from their magazine. [t] Here the shaikh is speaking of Muḥammad Surûr Zain al-'Âbidîn and his followers (a.k.a., the Surûrîs).

¹³ [This call] does not deviate from six points and ignorance and lack of comprehension in the religion prevail over its people. In their call, they do not turn to the most important of the important matters, i.e., singling Allah out in worship and keeping away from polytheism, i.e., the call of the Messengers, collectively, as Allah, exalted is He, said, (And We had certainly dispatched in every nation a Messenger [preaching] that you worship Allah and avoid the false gods) (16:36). So indeed, those tested by supplicating to the companions of the graves, appealing for aid through them, and slaughtering for them, they (i.e., the Messengers) have no share in their call! [t] Here the shaikh is speaking of Tablighi Jamaat (Ar. jamâ'ah at-tablîgh – lit. the group of conveying).

¹⁴ It was published by al-Bukhârî in his *Ṣaḥîḥ* (no. 6412) and is the first ḥadîth in *Kitâb ar-Riqâq*.

¹⁵ [t] Ar. imâm – leader, head. It is the honorific given to the head or heads of a particular group, whether it be a top scholar of the religion or the ruler of the Muslims.

¹⁶ [t] I.e., Shaikhs 'Alî Ḥasan al-Ḥalabî, Salîm bin 'Îd al-Hilâlî, Muḥammad Mûsâ Naṣr, Mash·hûr Ḥasan Salmân, Ḥusain bin 'Awdah al-'Awâyishah, and others.

[in] his¹⁷ concern with the issue of the woman's guardianship and in her sharing in the appointment [as guardian] of others. I refuted him in a treatise titled, *ad-Difâ' 'an aṣ-Ṣaḥâbî Abî Bakrah wa Marwiyâtih wal-Istidlâl li Man' Wilâyah an-Nisâ' 'alâr-Rijâl*,¹⁸ and when I cautioned against his repugnant slip I did not caution against his beneficial writings; among the men of the two *Ṣaḥîḥs*, as well as other [books], are narrators described with heresy whose narrations were accepted despite the People of Knowledge's notification of those heresies in order to caution against them.

In the beginning of Ramaḍân of 1423H, six months before the publication of *Rifqan Ahl as-Sunnah bi Ahl as-Sunnah*, I forwarded a letter of advice to one of those who the youth of the People of the Sunnah were affected by.¹⁹ He had replied with a polite letter in which he supplicated to Allah to benefit him with this advice and mentioned that he advised the one who I referred to in the letter.²⁰ I ask Allah U to grant him and me, as well as the rest of our brothers from the People of the Sunnah, success for all of what returns with good and the praiseworthy outcome; and that He keeps everybody away from all of what returns with harms and the disastrous outcome, in the worldly [life] and [in] the Afterlife. Surely, He is hearing [and] respondent. What follows is what has come in this letter [of mine]:

And so I surely write these words to your eminence in hopes that you accept them with an eye of consideration, while «the religion is [sincere] advice» and «the believer to the believer is like the building; they strengthen one another.» From the right of the Muslim upon the Muslim is his advice and cooperation with him upon the good.

1. During the meeting with your eminence which recently came to an end, you mentioned to me that you were greater than I in age; in these days I had entered into the eightieth decade²¹ and according to this, you had preceded in this decade. Accordingly then, surely my being from those who taught you in 1381H and what was after it is from the seniors' narrating from the minors.²² The likes of you and I are in need of being distracted from all of what results in disunity between the People of the Sunnah by beneficial knowledge.

2. Some time ago, I had previously heard a word from you: that you were distracted from being occupied with the Qur'an and pondering on its meanings by being busy with Ḥadîth and its

¹⁷ [t] I.e., Shaikh Muḥammad bin Sulaimân al-Ashqar's.

¹⁸ [t] I.e., *Defending the Companion Abî Bakrah and His Narrations, and Evidence for the Prevention of the Women's Guardianship Over Men*.

¹⁹ [t] I.e., Shaikh Rabî' bin Hâdî al-Madkhalî.

²⁰ [t] I.e., Shaikh Fâlih bin Nâfi' al-Ḥarbî.

²¹ [t] I.e., his 70s. Being about a year or so older than Shaikh 'Abdul-Muḥsin, Shaikh Rabî' bin Hâdî was one of the shaikh's students while studying at the Islamic University of Madînah. Shaikh Rabî' mentioned this fact publicly during the height of the turmoil described above by Shaikh 'Abdul-Muḥsin, and was subsequently translated and posted on some English internet message boards.

²² [t] Ar. riwâyah al-akâbir 'an al-aṣâghir – lit. the seniors' narration from the minors. [a] Just as [is mentioned] in *Nuzḥah an-Naḍḥr Sharḥ Nukhbah al-Fikr* by Ḥâfiḍh Ibn Ḥajar, the seniors' narrating from the minors is the narrator's narrating from those who are below him age, meeting i.e., meeting the shaikhs, or in degree.

men.²³ I say you are now distracted from the Qur'an and Ḥadīth by speaking about some of the People of the Sunnah, and others. From what has distracted you from being occupied with the knowledge of the Book and the Sunnah is battling with those who are not from the People of the Sunnah and [with] those who the traces of tribulations, the belittling of the scholars' status with the claim of their lack of comprehending current [events], have occurred from—[which] without doubt, is in its place. That which is not in its place, however, is the tendency for following up the errors of those who are from the People of the Sunnah and defaming them due to their not agreeing with you in some opinions; frequently being occupied with the likes of these is unbefitting. If the mention of some of their errors occurs, then being preoccupied with them, reiterating them, and making them the talk of sittings is unbefitting. Then with discussing them, you get angry and raise your voice—and surely that, with respect to what contains danger, has an affect on your health.

3. Mention of disparagement and accreditation, as well as talk about some of the People of the Sunnah and others has become common in these days. The spreading of that on the internet is from what caused the questions to [successively] arrive from Europe, America, North Africa, and other [countries], about some of those whose disparagement occurred from you and Shaikh ...²⁴ along with Shaikh ...'s²⁵ expanding the talk to the honours of the shaikhs and students of knowledge—domestic and foreign—whose lectures and writings Allah caused benefit with, to cautioning against them, and what results from that of deserting [one another] and mutual aversion; the Messenger ﷺ said, «Be welcoming, do not be alienating. And be easy, do not be difficult.» His encouragement to good should be desired for the mistaken person from the People of the Sunnah, along with notifying him of his error, if his error is clear. He should not be opposed, nor abandoned, nor should seeking benefit from him be cautioned against.

Although I believe that you do not agree with him regarding some of his speech about individuals, because of the association which is between you and Shaikh ...²⁶ and the connection of disparagement to you and him, what is not from you could be thought to be attributed to you. Due to this, the hope for you is that you do not occupy yourself with the disparaging of those who are from the People of the Sunnah, and that you have a position with regards to him that is restricted to its limit such that the students of knowledge and others, domestic and foreign, are safe from being occupied with 'it was said' and 'he said'²⁷ and the successive questions: What is your statement regarding the disparagement of so-and-so, or so-and-so by so-and-so, or so-and-so (although there is no connection between you and this person)? You are well known for diligence in learning and teaching, and you have beneficial writings. You surpassed your colleagues in the days of study and you have useful writings regarding knowledge. As for him,²⁸ then he was from

²³ [t] I.e., its narrators.

²⁴ [t] See footnote no. 20.

²⁵ [t] Ibid.

²⁶ [t] Ibid.

²⁷ [t] Ar. al-qīl wal-qāl – lit. the 'it was said' and the 'he said', referring to idle talk, gossip, etc.

²⁸ [t] See footnote no. 20.

the last of his colleagues and his grading at passing [the exam] was ‘good’.²⁹ He does not have seniority in knowledge, he does not have writings, and the bulk of his merchandise is being occupied with the honours of people; you have an example in the companions of Allah’s messenger ﷺ where after those who regretted what emanated from them, some of them said, “O people, question opinion in the religion!”

I ask Allah ﷻ to make all successful in what He is pleased with, [to] show us the truth as truth and make us successful in adhering to it, and [to] show us falsehood as falsehood and make us successful in avoiding it; surely He is hearing [and] respondent.

The praise is Allah’s, Lord of the worlds; and may Allah send salutations, peace, and blessings upon His servant and messenger, our Prophet Muḥammad, upon his family and his companions.

²⁹ [t] Ar. jayyid – good, perfect; outstanding, excellent; good (as in an examination grade, as opposed to mumtâz – passing with distinction).



Introduction to the First Edition³⁰

The praise is for Allah, the One who united the hearts of the believers, desired union and harmony for them, and cautioned them against division and differing. I testify that there is no god [worthy of worship] except Allah alone; He has no partner. He created, then measured; He legislated, then facilitated; and He was compassionate with the believers. I testify that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger who was commissioned with facilitating and the announcing of glad tidings, for he said, «Be easy, do not be difficult. And be welcoming, do not be alienating.» O Allah, send salutations, peace, and blessings upon him, upon his purified family, his companions—those who He described as being harsh against the disbelievers and merciful between themselves—and upon whoever followed them in excellence until the Day of Reward. O Allah, guide me, guide for me, and guide by me. O Allah, purify my soul from rancour and direct my tongue to speak the truth. O Allah, surely, I seek refuge with You lest I stray or be led astray, err or be caused to err, oppress or be oppressed, behave ignorantly or be treated ignorantly.

As for what follows, then the People of the Sunnah and Congregation are those who follow what Allah's messenger ﷺ and his companions were upon. Their ascription is to the Messenger's ﷺ sunnah, which he urged adherence to with his statement, «So upon you is my sunnah and the sunnah of the Guided Successors after me. Adhere to it and bite onto it with the molar teeth.» He cautioned against opposing it with his statement, «Beware of the innovated affairs [in religion], for surely, every innovation is heresy, and every heresy is misguidance,» and his statement, «Whoever detested my sunnah, then he is not from me.» This is contrary to others from the People of Desires and Heresies who follow paths the Messenger ﷺ and his companions were not upon. The People of the Sunnah's creed manifested with the appearance of his ﷺ mission, while the creeds of the People of Desires were born after his ﷺ time. From them is what existed during the end of the Companions' lifetime and from them is what existed after that. The

³⁰ [t] See footnote no. 2.

Messenger ﷺ informed that whoever lived from his companions would see this division and differing, for he said, «Indeed, he who lives from you will see much differing.» He then guided to the path of the Straight Way, i.e., following his sunnah and the sunnah of his guided successors. He cautioned against the innovated affairs and informed that they are misguidance. It is not intelligible, nor is it acceptable, that he hid truth and guidance from the Companions ﷺ, saving it for the people to come after them. So surely, all of those innovated heresies are evil. If there were good in any of them, then the Companions certainly would have arrived at it [before others]. They are, however, an evil many of those who came after them—of those who deviated from what the Companions ﷺ were upon—have been tested by. Imam Mâlik [?] had said, “The last of this nation will not be corrected except by what corrected its first.” Due to that, the People of the Sunnah are ascribed to the Sunnah, while others are ascribed to their false ascriptions, like the Jabarîs, the Qadarîs, the Murji'ah and the Twelver Imamîs,³¹ or to the names of certain individuals like the Jahmîs, the Zaidîs, the Ash'arîs, and the Ibâdîs—and it is not said in this respect that “the Wahhâbîs” is an ascription to Shaikh Muḥammad bin 'Abdil-Wahhâb [?], because the People of the Sunnah during the time of Shaikh Muḥammad [?] never came with anything new such as to ascribe it to him. Rather, he was an adherent to what the Righteous Predecessors were upon, an endorser of the Sunnah, a propagator of it, and a caller to it. Those full of hatred, however, apply this ascription to Shaikh Muḥammad bin 'Abdil-Wahhâb's [?] reformist call to confuse the people. [In doing so], they turned them³² away from following the truth and guidance, and they caused them to remain upon what they were upon of innovated heresies [that are in] opposition to what the People of the Sunnah and Congregation were upon.

In *al-I'tisām* (1/79), Imam ash-Shâṭibî said,

'Abdur-Raḥman bin Maḥdî said, “Imam Mâlik had been asked about the Sunnah and he said, ‘It is what has no name than the Sunnah,’ then he recited, (And that this is my straight way, so follow it and do not follow [other] paths, for they will separate you from His way) (6:153).

In *Madârij as-Sâlikîn* (3/179), Ibn al-Qayyim said, “Some of the imams had been asked about the Sunnah and they said, ‘[It is] what has no name other than the Sunnah,’ meaning that the People of the Sunnah do not have another name they are ascribed to.”

And in *Kitâb al-Intifâ'* by Ibn 'Abdil-Barr (pg. 35), [it is mentioned] “that a man asked [Imam] Mâlik, ‘Who are the People of the Sunnah?’ He said, ‘The People of the Sunnah are those who do not have a title they are known by; not Jahmî, not Qadarî, not Râfiḍî.’”

There is no doubt that the obligation upon the People of the Sunnah in every time and place is mutual affection, compassion in what is between them, and cooperation upon reverence and godliness.

Surely from what one regrets in this time is what occurred of alienation and differing from some of the People of the Sunnah; from what was caused by some of them being occupied with disparaging, cautioning [against], and boycotting others. The obligation was that their efforts

³¹ [t] I.e., the Râfiḍî Shî'ah.

³² [t] I.e., the people.

be collectively directed at others from the disbelievers and the People of Heresies hostile to the People of the Sunnah; that they be mutually affectionate and compassionate with regards to what is between them, mentioning one another with gentleness and lenience.

I had considered writing words as an advice to all of these [people], asking Allah U that He causes benefit with these words. Surely, I only want rectification of what I am able and my success is not possible except by Allah; upon Him I rely and to Him I repent. I have named this advice, *Gentleness, [O] People of the Sunnah, with the People of the Sunnah.*

I ask Allah for the success and the correctness for all, that He rectifies their discord, unifies their hearts, guides them to the paths of peace, and brings them from the darkneses into the light; surely, He is hearing and respondent.

The Grace of [Articulated] Speech and Clarification

Allah's graces upon His slaves cannot be counted, nor enumerated. From the greatest of these graces is the [articulated] speech with which the person clarifies his intent, says the straight word, and commands the recognized [good acts] and prohibits the reprehensible [acts]. Whoever is deprived of it, these affairs do not arise for him. Mutual understanding with others is not possible for him except by gesturing or writing—if he could write. Allah ﷻ said,

(And Allah puts forward an example of two men. One of them is dumb, not having power over anything and he is a burden to his master. Whichever way he directs him he brings no good. Is such a man equal to one who commands justice and is himself on a Straight Way?) (16:76).

In its exegesis, it has been said, “Surely, it is an example put forth by Allah of Himself and of the idol.” It was said, “Surely, it is an example of the disbeliever and the believer.” al-Qurṭubī said (9/149), “It was narrated from Ibn 'Abbās and it is acceptable, because it³³ is general,” and it is clear in the deficiency of the dumb slave who does not benefit others and whose master does not benefit from him, whichever way he directs him.

Allah ﷻ said, (Then, by the Lord of the heaven and the earth, indeed it is certainly truth, similar to [the fact] that you can speak) (51:23). Surely, Allah has sworn by Himself on the certainty of the resurrection and the reward for deeds, just as the [articulated] speech is currently occurring for those addressed; and in that is an allusion to the grace of [articulated] speech.

He, glorified is He, said, (He created man; ! He taught him the clarification) (55:4-5). al-Ḥasan explained ‘the clarification’ as [articulated] speech; and in that is an allusion to the grace of [articulated] speech by which the person’s explanation arises from what he intends.

He, exalted is He, said, (Have We not made for him a pair of eyes, ! a tongue and two lips?) (90:8-9). In his *Tafsīr*, Ibn Kathīr said,

His statement, exalted is He, (Have We not made for him a pair of eyes,) meaning he sees with them; (a tongue,) meaning he speaks with it, and thus expresses what is inside him; (and two lips,) he seeks aid from them for speech, eating food, and beautification for his face and mouth.

³³ [t] I.e., the verse.

From the known [facts] is that certainly this grace truly becomes a grace when the [articulated] speech is used for what is good. As for when it is used for evil, then it is a curse upon its companion and whoever was deprived of this grace is better off than him.

Preserving the Tongue from Speech Except in Good

Allah ﷻ said, (O you who believed, be godly to Allah and say a right word. ! He will rectify your deeds for you and forgive your sins for you; and whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, then surely he has achieved a tremendous success) (33:70-71).

He ﷻ said,

(O you who believed, avoid much of the assumption! Surely, part of the assumption is sin. And do not spy, nor backbite one another. Would one of you want to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Surely you would hate it. And be godly to Allah; surely Allah is an acceptor [of repentance, and] compassionate) (49:12).

He, exalted is He, said,

(We have indeed created man and We know what his own soul whispers to him. We are closer to him than his jugular vein, ! since the two receivers [who] receive from the right and from the left are supervisors. He does not utter a statement except that he has a watcher prepared [to record it]) (50:16-18).

He, exalted is He, said, (And those who annoy believing men and women for other than what they earned, indeed bear [the burden of] slander and manifest sin) (33:58).

In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (no. 2589) from Abî Hurairah, [it is recorded] that

Allah's messenger ﷺ [asked], «Do you know what backbiting is?» They said, «Allah and His Messenger are more knowledgeable.» He said, «[It is] your mentioning of your brother with what he detests.» It was [asked], «So then do you see [it as backbiting] if my brother has what I said?» He said, «If he had what you said, then you have backbitten him. If he did not have it, then you have slandered him.»

Allah ﷻ said, (Do not follow what you do not have knowledge of. Surely, the hearing, the sight, and the heart, will all be questioned about it) (17:36).

From Abî Hurairah ؓ, [who] said,

Allah's messenger ﷺ said, «Surely Allah is pleased with three [things] for you and He detests three [things] for you. He is pleased for you that you worship Him, that you do not associate anything with Him, and that you all adhere to Allah's rope and

not be divided. He detests for you ‘it was said’ and ‘it is said’, excessive questioning, and the wasting of wealth.»³⁴

From Abî Hurairah ؓ, from the Prophet ﷺ, [who] said,

«The son of Adam’s share of fornication was written for him, attaining that unavoidably. Indeed, the eyes’ fornication is the sight; the ears’ fornication is the hearing; the tongue’s fornication is the speech; the hand’s fornication is the touch; the foot’s fornication is the step; and the heart wishes and desires, the private parts testify to that and deny it.»³⁵

In his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 10), al-Bukhârî narrated from 'Abdillāh bin 'Amr ؓ, from the Prophet ﷺ [who] said, «The Muslim is whose tongue and hands the [other] Muslims are safe from.»³⁶

In the ḥadīth’s explanation, Ḥāfiḍ³⁷ [Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī] said,

The ḥadīth is general with regards to the tongue with the exception of the hands, because [with] the tongue, speech is possible regarding those who have passed, those who are present and those who come after, unlike the hand. Yes! It is possible that the tongue shares in that by writing. And indeed, its affects in that are great.

In this regard, the poet says,

I wrote and have ascertained the day of my writing,
because my hand will perish and its writing will remain.
So if I did good, it will be rewarded with its like.
And if I did evil, then upon me is its reckoning.

In his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 6474), al-Bukhârî narrated from Sahl bin Sa'd ؓ from Allāh’s messenger ﷺ [who] said, «Whoever safeguards what is between his jaws and what is between his legs for me, I safeguard Paradise for him.» The intent of what is between the jaws and legs is the tongue and the private parts, [respectively].

³⁴ Published by Muslim (no. 1715); these three detested things came in the ḥadīth of al-Mughîrah with al-Bukhârî (no. 2408) and Muslim.

³⁵ Narrated by al-Bukhârî (no. 6612) and Muslim (no. 2657); the wording is Muslim’s.

³⁶ Muslim narrated it in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* and its wording was: “that a man asked Allāh’s messenger ﷺ, ‘Which of the Muslims is best?’ He said, «Whoever’s tongue and hands the [other] Muslims are safe from.» Muslim also narrated from the ḥadīth of Jâbir (no. 65) with the wording of the ḥadīth of 'Abdillāh bin 'Amr with al-Bukhârî.

³⁷ [t] Ar. ḥāfiḍ – memorizer, preserver. It is the honorific given to a traditionist with exceptional skills in memorising prophetic traditions. It also refers to a memorizer of the Qur'an.

In [their] *Ṣaḥīḥs*, al-Bukhārī (no. 6475) and Muslim (no. 74) [narrated] from Abī Hurairah ṭ from Allah's messenger ṛ [who] said, «Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, then let him speak good or be silent,» [to the end of] the ḥadīth.

In *Sharḥ al-Arba'īn*, regarding this ḥadīth's explanation, an-Nawawī said,

ash-Shāfi'ī said, "The ḥadīth's meaning is when one wants to speak, then let him ponder. So, if it became apparent that there is no harm upon him, he can speak. And if it became apparent that it contains harm and doubt, he should hold back." And it was conveyed by some of them that he said, "If you were to buy the paper for the ḥafāḍḥah,³⁸ indeed you would remain silent over much of the speech."

On pg. 45 of his book, *Rawḍah al-'Uqalā' wa Nuzḥah al-Fuḍalā'*, Imam Abū Ḥātim bin Hibbān al-Bustī said,

The obligation upon the sensible [person] is that he maintains silence until speaking is necessary for him. For how many more are those who regretted when they spoke and [how] fewer are those who regret when they remained silent. The longest of the people in misery and the greatest of them in being tested are those who have been tested by an unrestrained tongue and a closed heart.

On pg. 47, he also said,

The sensible [person's] tongue is behind his heart. So when he intends the statement, he returns to the heart. If it was for him, he spoke, and if not, then no. The ignorant person, his heart is on the tip of his tongue; whatever comes upon his tongue he speaks with. Whoever does not preserve his tongue does not make sense of his religion.

In [their] *Ṣaḥīḥs*, al-Bukhārī (no. 6477) and Muslim (no. 2988) narrated from Abī Hurairah that Allah's messenger ṛ said, «Surely, the servant will certainly speak a word not noticing what it contains. Due to it, he will be thrown into the Fire farther than what is between the east and the west.»³⁹

At the end of the ḥadīth of the Prophet's ṛ counsel to Mu'ādh,⁴⁰ in reply to Mu'ādh's ṭ [question], "O Prophet of Allah, will we be held accountable for what we speak with?" he ṛ said, «Are people thrown down into the Hellfire upon their faces—or upon their noses—except [by] the harvests of their tongues?»

In his explanation from his book, *al-Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam* (2/147), Ḥāfidh Ibn Rajab said,

³⁸ [ṭ] Ar. ḥafāḍḥah – the angels who write the deeds of the children of Adam. See *Mukhtār as-Ṣiḥāḥ*.

³⁹ The wording is Muslim's.

⁴⁰ Published by at-Tirmidhī (no. 2616), and [concerning the ḥadīth], he said, "An authentic good ḥadīth."

The intent of ‘the harvests of the tongues’ is the forbidden speech’s reward and punishment, because the person plants the good deeds and the misdeeds with his statement and his deed. On the Day of Standing, he then harvests what he planted. So whoever planted good from a statement or a deed, he will harvest the honour, while whoever planted evil from a statement or a deed, he will harvest the tomorrow of remorse.

He said, “This indicates that restraining the tongue, seizing it and confining it is the basis of all the good and that whoever controlled his tongue has controlled his affair, fortified it and seized it.”⁴¹

He conveyed from Yūnus bin 'Ubaid that he said, “I have not seen from anyone whose tongue was on a mind,⁴² except [that] I saw that⁴³ as goodness in the rest of his deeds,” and from Yaḥyâ bin Abî Kathîr that he said, “The speech of a person is not proper unless you recognize that in the rest of his deeds, while the speech of a person is not corrupted at all unless you recognize that in the rest of his deeds.”⁴⁴

In his *Ṣaḥîḥ* (no. 2581), Muslim narrated from Abî Hurairah that Allah’s messenger ﷺ [asked],

«Do you know who the bankrupt [person] is?» They said, “According to us, the bankrupt [person] is whoever does not have a dirham, nor any property.” So he said, «Surely, the bankrupt [person] from my nation comes on the Day of Standing with prayer, fasting and zakâh, while he comes having abused this [person], slandered this [person], having eaten the wealth of this [person], having shed the blood of this [person], and having beaten this [person]. So this [person] will be given from his good deeds and this [person] from his good deeds. Then if his good deeds are spent before he settles what is upon him, it is taken from their sins. So they are flung upon him, then he is thrown into the Fire.»

In his *Ṣaḥîḥ* (no. 2564), Muslim narrated a long ḥadîth from Abî Hurairah ؓ. At its end came, «It is enough evil for a person that he despises his Muslim brother. Everything of the Muslim is sacred to the Muslim: his blood, his wealth and his honour.»

In their *Ṣaḥîḥs*, al-Bukhârî (no. 1739) and Muslim narrated from Ibn 'Abbâs ؓ

that Allah’s messenger ﷺ addressed the people on the Day of Slaughter⁴⁵ and [asked], «O people, which day is this?» They said, “A sacred day.” He [asked], «Which city is this?» They said, “A sacred city.” He [asked], «Then which month is this?» They said, “A sacred month.” He said, «Then surely your blood, your wealth,

⁴¹ *al-Jâmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, (2/146).

⁴² [t] I.e., he was mindful of what he says.

⁴³ [t] I.e., his mindfulness.

⁴⁴ *al-Jâmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, (1/149).

⁴⁵ [t] I.e., the 10th of Dhîl-Ḥijjah, the first day of 'Īd al-Aḍ-ḥâ.

and your honours are sacred to you just like the sacredness of this day of yours, in this city of yours, in this month of yours.» Then he repeated it several times, raised his head and [asked], «O Allah, have I conveyed?» Ibn ‘Abbâs C said, “For, by the One whose hand my soul is in, indeed, it was certainly his counsel to his nation. ‘So let the witness convey to the absent. Do not return as disbelievers after me, some of you striking the necks of others.’⁴⁶

In his *Ṣaḥîḥ* (no. 2674), Muslim narrated from Abî Hurairah ؓ that Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said,

«Whoever called to guidance will have the likes of the rewards of whoever followed him and that would not diminish anything from their rewards. And whoever called to misguidance will have upon him the likes of the offences of whoever followed him and that would not diminish anything from their offences.»

In *at-Tarḥîb wat-Tarḥîb* (1/65), commenting on the ḥadîth, «When the son of Adam dies, his deeds cease except from one of three ... ,» [to the end of] the ḥadîth, Ḥâfiḍh al-Mundhirî said,

The transcriber of beneficial knowledge has his reward and the reward of whoever read it, copied it, or acted upon it after him, as long as his writing and the acting upon it remains, because of this ḥadîth and its likes. The transcriber of [what is] non-beneficial from what obligates offence, upon him is his burden and the burden of whoever read it, copied it, or acted upon it after him, as long as his writing and the acting upon it remains, because of what has preceded from the ḥadîths, «whoever established a good or evil sunnah.» And Allah is more knowledgeable.

In his *Ṣaḥîḥ* (no. 6502), al-Bukhârî narrated from Abî Hurairah ؓ [who] said, “Allah’s messenger ﷺ said, «Surely Allah said, “Whoever makes an ally of Mine an enemy, then I will surely declare warn on him,»» [to the end of] the ḥadîth.

⁴⁶ The wording is al-Bukhârî’s.

Assumption and Spying

The Most High said, (O you who believed, avoid much of the assumption! Surely, part of the assumption is sin. And do not spy) (49:12).

Surely this noble verse contains the command to avoid a lot of the assumption, that some of it is an offence, and the prohibition against spying. Spying is searching for the people's faults; and it is certainly what occurs in consequence of poor assumption. He r said,

«Beware of assumption, for surely assumption is the most untruthful of speech. Do not probe [for each others faults]. Do not spy [on each other]. Do not be envious [of each other]. Do not have mutual hatred [towards each other]. Do not have disparity [amongst each other]. Be Allah's servants, as brothers.»⁴⁷

In his exegesis of a verse in chapter al-Ḥujurât (ch. 49), Ibn Kathîr mentioned [that] the Commander of the Believers, 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭâb t said, "Only assume good of a word that comes from your believing brother and find a good understanding for it."

As [mentioned] in his biography in *Tahdhîb at-Tahdhîb*, Bakr bin 'Abdillâh al-Muzanî said, "Beware of the words in which if you were correct, you would not be rewarded, and if you erred in them, you would have offended, i.e., poor assumption of your brother."

And as mentioned in *al-Hilyah* (2/285) by Abî Nu'aim, Abû Qilâbah 'Abdullah bin Zaid al-Jazmî said, "If something you dislike was conveyed to you from your brother, then search your utmost for the excuse for him. Then if you do not find for him an excuse, say to yourself, 'I hope my brother has an excuse I do not know of'."

Sufyân bin Ḥusain said, "I mentioned a man in an ill [manner] near Iyâs bin Mu'âwiyah, so he looked at my face and [asked], 'Did you invade Rome?' I said, 'No.' He [asked], 'Then Sind, India, and the Turks?' I said, 'No.' He said, 'So Rome, Sind, India, and the Turks are safe from you, [but] your Muslim brother is not safe from you?!'" He said, "So I did not repeat it after it."⁴⁸

I say how good is this reply from Iyâs ibn Mu'âwiyah who was famous for intelligence; and this reply is an example of his intelligence.

In *Rawḍah al-'Uqalâ'* (pg. 131), Abû Ḥâtim bin Ḥibbân al-Bustî said,

⁴⁷ Narrated by al-Bukhârî (no. 6064) and Muslim (no. 2563).

⁴⁸ *al-Bidâyah wan-Nihâyah* by Ibn Kathîr, (13/121).

The obligation upon the sensible [person] is the need of well-being by the leaving of spying on the people's faults with being occupied with correcting his own faults. For surely, whoever is occupied with his own faults in place of others' faults relieves his body and does not tire his heart. So the more he examines his own fault, he attaches no importance to what he sees of its like from his brother. And surely, whoever is occupied with the people's faults in place of his own faults, his heart becomes blind, his body becomes tired and it becomes difficult for him to leave his own faults.

And on pg. 133, he said,

Spying is from the branches of hypocrisy, just as good assumptions are from the branches of faith. The sensible [person] has good assumptions of his brothers and stands alone with his griefs and his sorrows, just as the ignorant [person] has poor assumptions of his brothers and is not reminded of his crimes and his anxieties.

Gentleness and Lenience

Allah described His prophet Muḥammad ﷺ as being upon a tremendous character, for He said, (And you are surely upon a tremendous character) (68:4). He described him with gentleness and lenience, for He said, (So because of mercy from Allah, you were lenient with them. If you were crude, harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from around you) (3:159). He described him with mercy and graciousness with the believers, for He said, (A messenger has certainly come to you from yourselves. What distresses you is hurtful for him. [He is] eager for you; gracious [and] compassionate with the believers) (9:128).

The Messenger ﷺ commanded gentleness and desired it, for he said, «Be easy and do not be difficult; be welcoming and do not be alienating.»⁴⁹ In his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 220), al-Bukhārī narrated from Abī Hurairah ؓ that in the story of the Bedouin who urinated in the mosque, Allah's messenger ﷺ said to his Companions, «Invite him and spill a bucket of water or a tumbler of water on his urine. For you were certainly sent as facilitators, you were not sent as those who make things difficult.»

al-Bukhārī narrated (no. 6927) from 'Ā'ishah ؓ that Allah's messenger ﷺ said, «O 'Ā'ishah! surely Allah is gentle; He loves gentleness in all of the affair.» It was narrated by Muslim (no. 2593) with the wording, «O 'Ā'ishah! surely Allah is gentle; He loves gentleness and gives due to gentleness what He does not give due to harshness and what He does not give due to what is equivalent to it.» In his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 2594), Muslim narrated from 'Ā'ishah, from the Prophet ﷺ [who] said, «Surely, gentleness does not exist in anything except that it beautifies it and it is not removed from anything except that it disfigures it.» Muslim also narrated (no. 2592) from Jarīr bin 'Abdillāh ؓ from the Prophet ﷺ [who] said, «Whoever forbids gentleness, he forbids good.»

Allah had commanded the two noble prophets, Mūsā ؑ and Hārūn ؑ, to invite Pharaoh with gentleness and lenience, for He said, (Go to Pharaoh. Surely, he has transgressed. ! Then make a lenient statement to him, perhaps he will remember or fear [Me]) (20:43-44). Allah described the noble Companions with the compassion in what is between them, for He said, (Muḥammad is the Allah's messenger and those who are with him stern against the disbelievers and merciful between themselves) (48:29).

⁴⁹ Published by al-Bukhārī (no. 69) and Muslim (no. 1734) from the ḥadīth of Anas. Muslim published it from Abī Mūsā and its wording is, «Be welcoming and do not be alienating; be easy and do not be difficult.»

The People of the Sunnah's Stance on the Scholar When He Errs is that He is Excused. Thus, He is Not Hereticated, Nor is He Boycotted

Infallibility is not for anyone after Allah's messenger ﷺ, so no scholar is safe from errors. Whoever errs should not be followed in his error, and that error should not be taken as a means to disgrace him and caution against him. Rather, his few errors should be forgiven because of the many [things he is] correct [in]. Whoever was from these scholars who have passed, then one should benefit from his knowledge with the wariness of following him in the error, supplicating for him and asking [Allah to have] mercy upon him. And whoever was alive, whether he was a scholar or a student of knowledge, he is to be informed of his error with gentleness, lenience, and love for his well-being from the error and his return to [what is] correct.

Imams al-Baihaqî, an-Nawawî, and Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalânî are from the scholars who have passed while having defectiveness in the issues of creed and the scholars and the students of knowledge cannot do without their knowledge—nay, surely their writings are from the important references for those who busy themselves with knowledge.

So as for Imam Aḥmad bin Ḥusain, Abū Bakr al-Baihaqî, then surely, in *as-Siyar* (18/163 and what is after it), regarding him, adh-Dhahabî said, “He is the ḥafīḍh, the 'allāmah, the credible, the jurist, Shaikh of Islam.” He said, “It was blessed for him in his knowledge and he composed beneficial works.” He said, “He withdrew within his village devoting himself with compiling and writing. So he worked on *as-Sunan al-Kabîr* in ten volumes and no one has similar to it.” He mentioned he had many other books and his book *as-Sunan al-Kubrâ* was printed in ten large volumes. He conveyed words from Ḥafīḍh 'Abdîl-Ghâfir bin Ismâ'il [who] said regarding him, “His writings come close to a thousand volumes, of which no one had preceded him to. He combined between the knowledge of Ḥadîth, jurisprudence, the clarifying of the defects of Ḥadîth, and the aspect of the combining between⁵⁰ the ḥadîths.” adh-Dhahabî also said, “So the works of al-Baihaqî are of great worth, ample in benefits. Few were those who mastered their works like Imâm Abî Bakr, so it is necessary for the scholar to give attention to these, especially his *Sunan al-Kubrâ*.”

As for Imam Yahyâ bin Sharaf an-Nawawî, then in *Tadhkirah al-Ḥuffâḍh* (4/359), regarding him, adh-Dhahabî had said, “The imam, the ḥafīḍh, the unique, the exemplar, Shaikh of Islam, the star of the Patrons⁵¹ ... author of beneficial works.” He said,

⁵⁰ [t] I.e., reconciling seemingly contradictory authentic narrations.

⁵¹ [t] Ar. awliyâ' (sing. walî) – helper, supporter, benefactor, sponsor; friend, close associate; patron, protector; legal guardian; saint.

Along with what he was upon of the battle with his soul, the implementation of the intricacies of piety⁵² and control, the filtering of the soul from flaws and erase it from its inclinations, he was a memorizer of the Ḥadīth, its sciences, its men, its authentic and its defective; [he was] at the head in knowledge of the [body of] opinion.

In *al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah* (17/540), Ibn Kathīr said,

Then he took great care in composing and he gathered many things. From them is what he completed and from them is what he did not complete. From what he completed were *Sharḥ Muslim*,⁵³ *ar-Rawḍah*,⁵⁴ *al-Minhāj*,⁵⁵ *ar-Riyāḍ*,⁵⁶ *al-Adhkār*, *at-Tibyān*, *Tahrīr at-Tanbīh*⁵⁷ and its authentication, *Tahdhīb al-Asmā' wal-Lughāt*, *Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā'*, and other than that. From what he did not complete—and if completed, it would not have an equal in its matter—is *al-Muhaddhab*'s explanation, which he called *al-Majmū'*. He reached until the book of usury in it and excelled in it,⁵⁸ mastered and caused benefit, and he criticised accurately. He edited the jurisprudence of the [Shāfi'ī body of] opinion and other [bodies of opinion] in it. He edited the Ḥadīth according to what is befitting, the rare [words], the language, and important things only found in it ... I do not know better than it regarding the books of jurisprudence.

With this vastness and mastery in writings, he was not from those who lived long, for the period of his life was forty-five years; he was born 731H and died 676H.

As for Ḥāfiḍh Aḥmad bin 'Alī bin Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, then he is the imam famous for his many writings. The most important of them is *Fatḥ al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, which is a great reference work for the scholars. [Also] from them are *al-Iṣābah*,⁵⁹ *Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb* and his *Taqrīb*,⁶⁰ *Lisān al-Mizān*, *Ta'jīl al-Manfa'ah*,⁶¹ *Bulūgh al-Marām*, and others.

From the contemporaries is the shaikh, the 'allamah, the traditionist⁶² Muḥammad Nāṣir ad-Dīn al-Albānī. I do not know of a counterpart for him in this era with regards to meticulousness in Ḥadīth and vastness of familiarity in it. He was not safe from falling in matters considered by many to be errors from him, like his concern with the issue of the ḥijāb and the

⁵² [t] Ar. wara' – piety, piousness, godliness; caution, cautiousness; reserve.

⁵³ [t] I.e., *al-Minhāj Sharḥ Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj*.

⁵⁴ [t] I.e., *Rawḍah at-Ṭalībīn*.

⁵⁵ [t] I.e., *Daqā'iq al-Minhāj*.

⁵⁶ [t] I.e., *Riyāḍ aṣ-Ṣāliḥīn*.

⁵⁷ [t] I.e., *Tahrīr Alfāḍḥ at-Tanbīh aw Lughah al-Fiqh*.

⁵⁸ [t] I.e., he excelled in his explanation of *al-Muhaddhab*.

⁵⁹ [t] I.e., *al-Iṣābah fī Tamayyuz aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*.

⁶⁰ [t] I.e., *Taqrīb at-Tahdhīb*.

⁶¹ [t] I.e., *Ta'jīl al-Manfa'ah bi Zawā'id Rijāl al-A'imma al-Arba'ah*.

⁶² [t] Ar. muḥaddith – speaker, transmitter of prophetic statements and traditions. In Islamic terminology it refers to a scholar of the branches of knowledge pertaining to prophetic narrations and traditions, referred to by some Orientalist scholars as a 'traditionist', hence my use of it here.

stipulating that veiling the woman's face is not an obligation, but a desirable [act].⁶³ If what he said was true, then it surely is from the truth whose concealment is necessary, because of some of the women who desire unveiling depending on it. Like that is his statement, "Surely, placing the [two] hands on the chest after the bowing⁶⁴ is a misguiding heresy," in the book, *Şifah aş-Şalâh an-Nabî* r, while it is a disputed issue. Like that is what he mentioned in *Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'îfah* (no. 2355), namely that the lack of taking from what exceeds the fistful of the beard is from the incidental heresies. And like that is his forbidding circular gold for women. And with my disapproval of his statement in these issues, I surely cannot do without—and I see that others cannot do without—his books and the benefit from them. How excellent is the statement of Imam Mâlik ?, "Everything is taken or rejected from one's statements, except the companion of this grave," and he pointed to the grave of the Prophet r.

These are transmissions from a group from People of Knowledge in stipulation and elucidation of forgiving the scholar's error with regard to the many [things he is] correct [in]:

Sa'îd bin al-Musayyib (d.93H) said, "It is not from a scholar, nor a distinguished [person], nor a virtuous [person], except he has a fault. Whoever's virtue was more than his deficiency, however, his deficiency goes away because of his virtue just as whoever's deficiency overwhelmed him, his virtue goes away." Others said, "The scholar is not safe from error. So whoever scarcely erred and was often correct, then he is a scholar, while whoever was scarcely correct and often erred, then he is an ignorant [person]."⁶⁵

'Abdullah bin al-Mubâarak (d.181H) said, "If the man's merits outweighed his drawbacks, do not mention the drawbacks. And if the drawbacks outweighed the merits, do not mention the merits."⁶⁶

Imâm Aḥmad (d.241H) said, "The likes of Is-ḥâq (i.e., Ibn Râhawaih) has not crossed the bridge from Khurasân, even though he differed with us in things. For surely, the people do not cease to differ with one another."⁶⁷

Abū Ḥâtim bin Hibbân (d.354H) said,

'Abdul-Malik—i.e., Ibn Abî Sulaimân—was from the best of the People of Kūfah and their ḥâfiḍhs. The general rule for whoever memorises and narrates from his memory is that he makes mistakes. It is not from justice to leave the Ḥadīth of a credible shaikh whose integrity is sound because of mistakes he makes in his narration. If we were to traverse this path, it would certainly necessitate us leaving the Ḥadīth of az-Zuhrī, Ibn Juraij, ath-Thawrī, and Shu'bah, because they were from the people of memorization and precision. They used to narrate from their memory and they were not infallible such that they did not make mistakes in their narrations. Rather, the precaution and the foremost in the likes of this is acceptance of what the credible [person] narrates of the narrations and leaving what is sure he is mistaken in,

⁶³ [t] Ar. mustaḥabb – recommended, commendable, desirable; well-liked.

⁶⁴ [t] Ar. rukū' – bowing (at the waist, especially in prayer).

⁶⁵ *Jāmi' Bayân al-'Ilm wa Faḍlih* by Ibn 'Abdil-Barr, (2/48).

⁶⁶ *Siyar A'lâm an-Nubalâ'* by adh-Dhahabî, (8/352, 1st ed.).

⁶⁷ Ibid., (11/371).

so long as that is not excessive from him such that it outweighs [what he is] correct [in]. For if it was like that, at that time, the leaving is deserved.⁶⁸

Shaikh of Islam Ibn Taimiyyah (d.728H) said,

From what is befitting is that one recognize that the groups associated to [those] followed in the fundamentals of the religion and [theological] rhetoric are on degrees. From them are [those] who have opposed the Sunnah in great fundamentals, and from them are [those] who have certainly opposed the Sunnah in intricate matters.

Whoever might have refuted others from the groups that are further away from the Sunnah than he is, then he is praised with regards to what he refuted of the falsehood and said of the truth. He might, however, extended beyond justice in his refutation in where he denied some of the truth and spoke some falsehood. So he might have refuted a large heresy with a heresy of lesser significance than it and refuted a falsehood with a falsehood of lesser significance than it. This is the condition of most of the People of [Theological] Rhetoric associated with the Sunnah and Congregation.

If the likes these did not make what they innovated a saying by which they divide the congregation of Muslims, making allies and enemies according to it, it would be from a type of mistake; and Allah ﷻ forgives the believers for their mistakes in the likes of that.

Because of this, many of the predecessors and the imams of the [Muslim] nation fell into the likes of this; they had statements they made due to independent judgement,⁶⁹ [which] opposed what was established in the Book and the Sunnah. Contrary to [those] who ally with the one who agrees with them and make enemies of their opposers; they cause division among the congregation of Muslims; they excommunicate and declare their opposers sinners, but not those who agree with them in the issues of opinions and independent judgements; they make it lawful to fight their opposers, but not those who agree with them, for these [people] are from the people of division and differings.⁷⁰

And he said,

⁶⁸ *ath-Thiqât*, (7/97-98).

⁶⁹ [t] Ar. *ijtihād* – effort, exertion, endeavour, pains; application; independent judgement in a legal or theological question using established jurisprudential principles to derive rulings from the available texts.

⁷⁰ *Majmū' al-Fatâwâ*, (3/348-349).

Many of the mujtahids⁷¹ from the Predecessors and the later generations⁷² have said and done what is a heresy while they did not know it was a heresy either because of weak ḥadīths they assumed were authentic, because of verses from which they understood what was not intended from them, or because of an opinion they held while texts did not reach them regarding the issue. If the man was godly to his Lord as much as he was able, he is entered into His saying, (Our Lord, Do not take us to account if we forget or fall into error) (2:286); and in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, is that Allah said, “I have done [that].”⁷³

Imam adh-Dhahabī (d.748H) said,

Then surely, if what the formidable [scholar] from the imams of knowledge is correct in was numerous, his pursuit of the truth was known, his knowledge was vast, his intelligence was apparent, and his righteousness, his piety and his adherence were recognized, his mistakes are forgiven for him. Yes, we do not declare him astray, throw him away and forget his merits! Nor do we imitate him in his heresy and error; we hope for repentance from that for him.⁷⁴

He also said,

If we were to rise against an imam, hereticate him and boycott him, whenever he erred in his independent judgement in one of the issues with an error [that is] forgiven for him, certainly, no one with us would be safe—not Ibn Naṣr, not Ibn Mandah, not [those] who are greater than them. Allah is the people’s guide to the truth and He is the most merciful of the merciful. So we seek refuge with Allah from desire and crudeness.⁷⁵

And he also said,

If [it were] that we were to ruin and hereticate everyone who erred in his independent judgement—despite validity of his faith and his aspiring to follow the truth—certainly, few [are those] from the imams who would be safe with us. May Allah have mercy upon the people by His grace and His kindness.⁷⁶

⁷¹ [t] Ar. mujtahid – diligent, industrious; a legist or jurist who is capable of independent judgement (see footnote no. 69).

⁷² [t] Ar. khalaf – successor; descendant, offspring, scion. Here it refers to the later generations of the Islamic nation.

⁷³ *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, (19/191-192).

⁷⁴ *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'*, (5/271).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, (14/39-40).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, (14/376).

He also said, “We love the Sunnah and its people. And we love the scholar according to what he has of adherence and praiseworthy characteristics. We do not love what he heresied with palatable interpretation. Certainly, the consideration is with the abundance of merits.”⁷⁷

Ibn al-Qayyim (d.751) said,

Recognition of the virtue and the abilities of the Islam’s imams, their rights and their ranks, and that their virtue, their knowledge and their sincerity for Allah and His messenger, does not obligate acceptance of everything they say. Whatever occurred in their verdicts from the issues in which what the Messenger came with was hidden from them, then they spoke with the extent of their knowledge, while the truth was in opposition to it, does not obligate the throwing away of their statements in totality, diminishing them and defaming them. For these two unjust extremes opposed the intent. The intent of the path is between them both, so we do not sin, nor are we infallible,

until he said,

and whoever has knowledge in the law and the reality knows with certainty that the honourable man who has a righteous past and good effects in Islam; and he is a position in relation to Islam and its people; there might be the lapse and the slip from him for which he is excused—rather, [he is] rewarded due to his independent judgement. Thus it is not permissible that he be followed in it, nor is it permissible that his position, his leadership and his status be voided from the Muslims’ hearts.⁷⁸

Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī (d.795H) said, “Allah refuses infallibility for a book other than His Book, and the fair [person] is [the one] who forgives the few mistakes of a person because of the many [things he is] correct [in].”⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Ibid., (20/46).

⁷⁸ *I’lām al-Muwaqqi’in*, (3/295).

⁷⁹ *al-Qawâ'id*, pg. 3.

The Tribulation From Some of the People of the Sunnah in This Era of Disparaging and Boycotting and the Way of Safety From It

In this time, the People of the Sunnah's occupation with one another in disparaging and in cautioning has occurred. From that, division, differing, and boycotting [one another] have resulted, while [what was] appropriate—no, [what was] incumbent was good relations, compassion between themselves, and their standing as a single rank in the face of the People of Heresies and Desires, the opposers of the People of the Sunnah and Congregation. And that⁸⁰ returns to two causes:

The first of them is that from the People of the Sunnah in this era are [those] whose practice and whose chief concern is following of errors and searching for them, whether they be in writings or tapes, then cautioning from whoever any of these errors occurred from. From these errors for which the individual is disparaged and because of which he is cautioned against is, for example, his cooperation with one of the organisations by delivering lectures or participating in conferences, while Shaikhs 'Abdul-'Azîz bin Bâz and Muḥammad bin 'Uthaimîn V had used to deliver lectures for this organisation by way of telephone. One blames it for its entering into a matter for which these two honourable scholars have given a verdict on. The person's condemnation of his own opinion is more deserving than his condemnation of the opinion of others, especially when it was an opinion for which the formidable scholars had given a verdict on. After what occurred during the treaty of al-Ḥudaibiyah, some of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ used to say, “O people, suspect the opinion with regards to the religion!”

From the disparaged are those whose benefit is tremendous, whether it be by way of lessons, writings, or sermons. He is cautioned against because he is not known to have words about so and so, or such and such group, for example. Rather, the disparaging and the cautioning has certainly reached the last remnants of some of the Arab lands, of [those] whose benefit is prevalent and their endeavours are tremendous in manifesting, spreading, and calling to the Sunnah. There is no doubt that cautioning against the likes of these contains severing the way between the students of knowledge and [those] who they can possibly benefit from with regards to knowledge and character.

The second is that from the People of the Sunnah are [those] who wrote in refutation of someone from the People of the Sunnah if he saw errors by him. Then surely, the refuted would meet the refutation with a refutation [of his own]. Then each of them would become occupied with reading what the other has of writings, old or new, and likewise, listening to what he has of

⁸⁰ [t] I.e., the disparaging and the cautioning

tapes, for the gathering of errors and the hunting of shortcomings—while it could be that some of them are by way of slip of the tongue. He turns to that by himself or others carry it out for him. Then each of them endeavours to increase the supporters he has owed by the other. Then the supporters for each one of them strive in commending the statement of whoever he supports, dispraising others, and coercing [those] who they meet to have a position on [the one] who they do not support. If he does not [take a position] he is hereticated following the heretication⁸¹ of the other party and that is followed by his boycott. The work of these supporters for one of the two parties rebuking the other party is from the greatest of causes for the manifestation and spreading of the tribulation to a vast extent.

The affair increases in evil when both parties and the supporters for them carry out spreading what they rebuke the other for in “internet” information. Then the youth of the People of the Sunnah in the different countries—rather, the continents—become preoccupied with continually studying what is spread on the sites, which is spread by these [ones] and these [ones] of the ‘it was said’ and the ‘he said’ that does not come with any good. Rather, it comes with harm and division, of which makes these [ones] and these [ones], the supporters of each of the two parties, resemble the frequenters of the bulletin boards to inquire into what is spread on them. They also resemble [those] captivated by the athletic clubs that encourage all of them to be factions. Then the controversy, the frigidity, and the contention occur amongst them as a result of that.

The road of safety from these tribulations is in what follows:

Firstly, in what is connected with disparaging and cautioning, one should consider what follows:

1. that whoever occupies himself with disparaging and cautioning against the scholars and the students of knowledge be godly to Allah. He should be preoccupied with searching for his faults in order to escape from them instead of occupation with the faults of others. He should guard the retention of his good deeds so he does not become grieved on account of them, distributing them to whoever he afflicted with their disparagement and defamation. He is more in need of those good deeds than others on a day in which neither wealth nor children will benefit, except whoever comes to Allah with a pure heart.

2. that instead of disparaging and cautioning, one occupy himself with the acquisition of, the seriousness and the diligence in, the beneficial knowledge to make use and be useful, and [seek] benefit and [cause] benefit. So from the good the person has is that he occupies [himself] with knowledge, learning, teaching, calling [to Allah], writing. He does not occupy himself with disparaging the scholars and the students of knowledge from the People of the Sunnah, cutting off the path connected to benefiting from them, thus being from the people of destruction. If he mastered that, he would certainly be from the people of construction. The likes of this [person] occupied with disparaging does not leave behind knowledge he can make use of when he dies. With his death, the people do not lose a scholar [who] benefits them. Rather, with his death, they are safe from his evil.

⁸¹ [t] Ar. tabdī' – heretication (or heretification): to hereticate, to pronounce or denounce as heretical [or innovatory], to make a heretic [or innovator] of someone. See *Webster's Third New International Dictionary Unabridged*, 1971. vol. 2, pg. 1059.

3. that the students from the People of the Sunnah in every place turn to being occupied with knowledge, with reading the useful books, and listening to the tapes by the scholars of the People of the Sunnah: the likes of Shaikh Ibn Bâz and Shaikh Ibn 'Uthaimîn, instead of their being occupied with contacting so-and-so or so-and-so, asking, “What is your view regarding so-and-so or so-and-so?” and “What do you say regarding so-and-so’s statement about so-and-so, and so-and-so’s statement about so-and-so?”

4. the students of knowledge should turn to the Presidency of the Deliverance of Verdicts for their questions about the conditions of individuals: are they⁸² turned to for verdicts and the taking of knowledge, or not? It is possible for whoever has knowledge of the specific individuals to write to the Presidency of the Deliverance of Verdicts with clarification of what he knows about them for examination of that, so that when issued, the disparaging and the cautioning is issued from a direction depended on for verdicts and for clarification of who knowledge is taken from and turned to for verdicts. There is no doubt that the direction turned to for deliverance of verdicts in issues is the one that should be turned to for recognition of who verdicts are sought from and knowledge is taken from; and [there is also no doubt] that no one [should] make himself an authority in the likes of these important [matters], because from the good of the person’s Islam is his leaving what does not concern him.

Secondly, in what is connected to the refutation of whoever erred, one should consider what follows:

1. that where the error is clear and evident, the refutation be with gentleness, lenience, and a strong desire for the well-being of the mistaken [person] from the error. One should turn to Shaikh 'Abdul-'Azîz bin Bâz’s ? refutations to seek benefit from regarding the way in which the refutation should be.

2. if the error that is refuted contains [what is] unclear, rather, it is from the matters in which the refuter can be correct or mistaken, then he should turn to the Presidency of the Deliverance of Verdicts for the decision in that. As for when the error was clear, it is upon the refuted [person] to recant from it, because returning to the truth is better than continuance in falsehood.

3. if the refutation of another occurred from a person, he has done what is upon him. He should not occupy himself with pursuing the refuted [person]. Rather, he should be preoccupied with knowledge that brings about tremendous benefit for him and for others; this is the way of Shaikh 'Abdil-'Azîz bin Bâz ? .

4. it is not permissible for any student of knowledge to test others with having a position on so-and-so, the refuted [person] or the refuter, [such that] if he agrees, he is safe and if he does not agree, he is hereticated and boycotted. It is not for anyone to ascribe the likes of this chaos in heretication and boycotting to the People of the Sunnah. It also is not for anyone to describe whoever does not traverse this chaotic way as diluting the Predecessors’ methodology. The beneficial boycott among the People of the Sunnah is what benefits the boycotted [person], like the father’s boycotting his son and the shaikh of his pupil. Like that is the boycott emanating from whoever has a high-ranking position and lofty standing, because a boycott [from] the likes of these [people] is beneficial for the boycotted [person]. As for if the boycott emanated from some

⁸² [t] I.e., these individuals.

of the students for others, especially if it were for matters which the boycott is not tolerated, then that does not benefit the boycotted [person] in anything. Rather, the existence of frigidity, disparity, and the severance of mutual relations result from it. In words he had about Yazîd bin Mu'âwiyah in *Majmû' al-Fatâwâ* (3/413-414), Shaikh of Islam Ibn Taimiyyah said,

The correct [position] is what the imams are upon: that he is not given love, nor is he cursed. With this then, if he were a sinner or an oppressor, then Allah forgives the sinner and the oppressor, especially if he came with tremendous good deeds. In his *Ṣaḥîḥ*, al-Bukhârî had narrated from Ibn 'Umar ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said, «The first army to invade Constantinople is forgiven,»⁸³ and the commander of the first army to invade it was Yazîd bin Mu'âwiyah, and Abū Ayūb al-Anṣarî ؓ was with him ...

So the obligation is [adopting a] middle course in that and turning away from mention of Yazîd bin Mu'âwiyah, **testing the Muslims by him**, because this is from the heresies opposing the People of the Sunnah.

He said, “Likewise is differentiating among the [Muslim] nation and testing it with what Allah and His Messenger ﷺ did not command.”⁸⁴

He said,

It is not for anyone to appoint a person other than the Prophet ﷺ for the [Muslim] nation, calling to his way, making allies and showing enmity on account of it. Nor should he appoint words for them other than the words of Allah and His messenger, and whatever the [Muslim] nation has of, making allies and showing enmity on account of them. Rather, this is from the actions of the People of Heresies who appoint a person or words for them by which they differentiate between the [Muslim] nation and by which they make allies and enemies according to those words or that connection.⁸⁵

And he said,

So if the instructor or the professor had ordered the boycott, the abandonment, the dropping, or the isolation of a person, or similar to that, then it is to be looked into: for if he had committed a legitimate sin, he is penalized according to his sin without addition. If he did not commit a legitimate sin, it is not permissible that he be

⁸³ [t] Shaikh of Islam Ibn Taimiyyah ؒ was known to quote ḥadīths from memory and it seems that he has done so with this passage. As far as I am able to ascertain, this ḥadīth is not found in *Ṣaḥîḥ al-Bukhârî* with this wording. The closest I was able to find was ḥadīth no. 2924, in which Khâlid bin Ma'dân related from Umm Ḥarâm that the Prophet ﷺ said, «The first army from my nation to invade Caesar's city is forgiven,» and Allah is more knowledgeable.

⁸⁴ *Majmû' al-Fatâwâ*, (3/415).

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, (20/164).

penalized with anything on account of the prejudice of the instructor or other than him.

It is not for the instructors to rally the people and do what casts enmity and hatred between them. Rather, they should be like brothers cooperating upon reverence and godliness, just as Allah, exalted is He, said, (And cooperate upon reverence and godliness and do not cooperate upon offence and transgression) (5:2).⁸⁶

In explanation of the ḥadīth «From the good of the person's Islam is his leaving what does not concern him,» from his book, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam* (1/288), Ḥāfiḍh Ibn Rajab said,

This ḥadīth is a tremendous foundation from the foundations of manners. Imam Abū 'Amr bin aṣ-Ṣalāḥ related from Abī Muḥammad bin Abī Zaid, the imam of the Mālikīs of his time, that he said, “The total of good's manners and reins branches from four ḥadīths: the Prophet's ﷺ statement, «Whoever believed in Allah and the Last Day, then let him speak good or let him remain silent,» his ﷺ statement, « From the good of the person's Islam is his leaving what does not concern him,» his ﷺ statement to the one he summarized the counsel for, «Do not get angry,» and his ﷺ statement, «The believer wants for his brother what he wants for himself.»

I say how in need are the students of knowledge of guiding [themselves] with these manners that return with good and benefit, for them and for others, along with remoteness from harshness and crudeness, which does not bear fruit except loneliness, separation, [mutual] aversion of the hearts, and tearing of the unity.

5. upon every student of knowledge sincere to himself is that he avoid following up what is spread in internet information, from what these [people] say regarding these [people], and these [people] regarding these [people]; and when using the internet, attention to looking at the likes of Shaikh 'Abdul-'Azīz bin Bâz's ﷺ site, reading his researches and his verdicts (which have now reached twenty-one volumes), and the verdicts of the Permanent Committee (which have now reached twenty volumes). And like that, Shaikh Muḥammad bin 'Uthaimīn's ﷺ site, reading his books and his many extensive verdicts.

In conclusion, I advise the students of knowledge to thank Allah ﷻ for His granting success to them, since He made them from its⁸⁷ students; to be concerned with sincerity in seeking it and make every conceivable sacrifice for its attainment; to preserve the times by being occupied with it, because knowledge is not acquired by hoping and by remaining lazy and sluggish. Yaḥyâ bin Abī Kathîr al-Yamâmî had said, “Knowledge is not possible with the body's rest.”⁸⁸ Verses have come in Allah's book and ḥadīths in His prophet's ﷺ sunnah indicating the nobility of knowledge and the virtue of its people, like His statement, exalted is He, (Allah, the

⁸⁶ Ibid., (28/15-16).

⁸⁷ [t] I.e., knowledge's students.

⁸⁸ Narrated by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* with his chain [of transmission] to him in his citing the ḥadīths of the times of the prayer.

angels and those given knowledge testified that there is no god [worthy of worship] except Him) (3:18), His statement, (Say: are those who know and those who do not know equal?) (39:9), His statement, (Allah raises those of you who believed and those given knowledge in degrees) (58:11), and His statement, (And say: [my] Lord, increase me in knowledge) (20:114). As for the ḥadīths regarding that, then from them is his ʾ statement, «Whoever Allah desires good for, He instructs him in the religion,»⁸⁹ his ʾ statement, «The best of you is whoever learns the Qur'an and teaches it,»⁹⁰ his ʾ statement, «Surely, with this Book Allah raises peoples and humbles others,»⁹¹ his ʾ statement, «Allah makes a person who heard my statement, then retained it [to memory] and conveyed it just as he heard it, shine,»⁹² his ʾ statement,

«Whoever follows a way in which he seeks knowledge, Allah U will clear a way from the ways of Jannah because of it. Surely, the Angels humble their wings in approval for the student of knowledge. And surely, whoever is in the heavens, whoever is on the earth, and the creatures within the sea certainly seek forgiveness for the scholar. Surely, the scholar's virtue over the worshipper is like the virtue of the moon on the night of al-Badr over the rest of the stars. Surely, the scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets; surely the Prophets do not leave behind any dīnār or dirhams, but they leave behind knowledge. So whoever has received it has received an abundant fortune,»⁹³

his ʾ statement, «When the person dies his actions are cut off from him, except from three: except from recurring charity, knowledge [that] is put to use, or a righteous child who supplicates for him,»⁹⁴ his ʾ statement,

«Whoever called to guidance will have the likes of the rewards of whoever followed him from the reward, that not diminishing anything from their rewards. And whoever called to misguidance will have upon him the likes of the offences of whoever followed him from the offence, that not diminishing anything from their offences.»⁹⁵

⁸⁹ It was related by al-Bukhārī (no. 71) and Muslim (no. 1037). The ḥadīth indicates that from the signs of Allah's desiring good for the servant is that He, exalted is He, instructs him in the religion, because surely, through his comprehension in the religion, he worships Allah upon insight and he calls others upon insight.

⁹⁰ It was narrated by al-Bukhārī (no. 5027).

⁹¹ It was narrated by Muslim (no. 817).

⁹² It is a successively narrated (Ar. mutawâtir) ḥadīth, coming from more than ten Companions. I mentioned their narrations in my book, *Dirâsah Ḥadīth «Naḍḍarallah Imra'an Sami'a Maqâlati» Riwâyan wa Dirâyan*.

⁹³ It is a good (Ar. ḥasan) ḥadīth because of other [narrations that strengthen it]. It was related by Abū Dâwud (no. 3628) and others. See its extraction in *Ṣaḥīḥ at-Targhīb wat-Tarhīb* (no. 70) and *at-Ta'liq 'alâ Musnad al-Imam Aḥmad* (no. 21715). Ḥâfiḍh Ibn Rajab has explained this ḥadīth in a single volume, and the first sentence came in a ḥadīth in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (no. 2699).

⁹⁴ It was narrated by Muslim (no. 1631).

⁹⁵ It was related by Muslim (no. 2674).

I also advise the people to preserve the time and structure it for what returns with good for the person, because of his ﷺ statement, «Two graces in which many of the people are cheated: good health and free time.»⁹⁶

I advise being distracted from what does not concern by what does concerns, because of his ﷺ statement, «From the good of the person's Islam is his leaving what does not concern him.»⁹⁷

I advise moderation and the middle course between exaggeration, harshness, excess, and negligence, because of his ﷺ statement, «Beware of exaggeration in the religion, because whoever was before you was destroyed on account of exaggeration in religion.»⁹⁸

And I advise caution from oppression, because of the holy ḥadīth,⁹⁹ «O my servants, I have surely forbidden oppression for Myself and I have made it forbidden among you. So do not oppress [one another],»¹⁰⁰ and because of his ﷺ statement, «Be god-fearing of oppression, for surely, oppression is darknesses on the Day of Standing.»¹⁰¹

I ask Allah ﷻ to grant success to the people in what contains the attainment of beneficial knowledge, acting on it, and calling to it upon insight; to unite them upon the truth and guidance, protecting them from tribulations—what is apparent from them and what is hidden. Surely, He is the Patron of that and the [One] capable of it. May Allah send salutations, peace, and blessings upon His servant and messenger, our Prophet Muḥammad, upon his family, his Companions and whoever followed them in excellence until the Day of Reward.

⁹⁶ It was narrated by al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 6412) and it is the first ḥadīth he has in *Kitāb ar-Riqāq*. In this book (11/235 with *al-Fatḥ*), he had mentioned a narration from 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib ؓ [who] said, “The worldly [life] has set out from behind, and the Afterlife has set out in front; each one of them has children. So be from the children of the Afterlife, and not from the children of the worldly [life], because today is deed without reckoning, while tomorrow is reckoning without action.”

⁹⁷ A good ḥadīth narrated by at-Tirmidhī (no. 2317) and others, and it is ḥadīth no. 12 from an-Nawawī's *al-Arba'īn*.

⁹⁸ It is an authentic ḥadīth related by an-Nasā'ī and others; it is from the ḥadīths of the Fare-well Ḥajj. See its extraction in *as-Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* by al-Albānī (no. 1283).

⁹⁹ [t] Ar. ḥadīth qudsī – lit. holy or sacred ḥadīth. It refers to a ḥadīth “narrated by the Prophet ﷺ from his Lord ﷻ.” See Ibn 'Uthaimīn's *Muṣṭalah al-Ḥadīth*.

¹⁰⁰ It was narrated by Muslim (no. 2577).

¹⁰¹ It was narrated by Muslim (no. 2578).

The following two subjects are written down at the end of the treatise, *al-Ḥath 'alā Ittibā' as-Sunnah wat-Taḥdhîr min al-Bida' wa Bayân Khaṭarihâ*, and I have considered writing them down here in order to attach them to the treatise, *Rifqan Ahl as-Sunnah bi Ahl as-Sunnah*.

The Heresy of Testing the People by Individuals

From the reprehensible heresies is what occurred in this time of some of the People of the Sunnah testing others by individuals, whether the incentive for the test is harshness for a person tested by, or whether the incentive for it is [high] commendation for another person. If the test's result was in agreement with what the tester desired, he would achieve welcoming, extolment, and commendation. Otherwise, his fortune would be disparagement, heretication, boycott, and cautioning.

These are transmissions from Shaikh of Islam Ibn Taimiyyah. The first of them [is] regarding heretication in testing by individuals, because of harshness for them, while the last of them [is] regarding heretication in testing by other individuals, because of [high] commendation for them.

In words he had about Yazîd bin Mu'âwiyah in *Majmû' al-Fatâwâ* (3/413-414), Shaikh of Islam Ibn Taimiyyah said,

The correct [position] is what the imams are upon: that he is not given love, nor is he cursed. With this then, if he were a sinner or an oppressor, then Allah forgives the sinner and the oppressor, especially if he came with tremendous good deeds. In his *Ṣaḥîḥ*, al-Bukhârî had narrated from Ibn 'Umar C that the Prophet ﷺ said, «The first army to invade Constantinople is forgiven,» and the commander of the first army to invade it was Yazîd bin Mu'âwiyah, and Abû Ayûb al-Anṣârî ؓ was with him ...

So the obligation is [adopting a] middle course in that and turning away from mention of Yazîd bin Mu'âwiyah, **testing the Muslims by him**, because this is from the heresies opposing the People of the Sunnah.

He said, “Likewise is differentiating among the [Muslim] nation and testing it with what Allah and His Messenger ﷺ did not command.”¹⁰²

He said,

It is not for anyone to appoint a person other than the Prophet ﷺ for the [Muslim] nation, calling to his way, making allies and showing enmity on account of it. Nor should he appoint words for them other than the words of Allah and His messenger, and whatever the [Muslim] nation has of, making allies and showing enmity on account of them. Rather, this is from the actions of the People of Heresies who

¹⁰² *Majmû' al-Fatâwâ*, (3/415).

appoint a person or words for them by which they differentiate between the [Muslim] nation, and by which they make allies and enemies according to those words or that connection.¹⁰³

And he said,

So if the instructor or the professor had ordered the boycott, the abandonment, the dropping, or the isolation of a person, or similar to that, then it is to be looked into: for if he had committed a legitimate sin, he is penalized according to his sin without addition. If he did not commit a legitimate sin, it is not permissible that he be penalized with anything on account of the prejudice of the instructor or other than him.

It is not for the instructors to rally the people and do what casts enmity and hatred between them. Rather, they should be like brothers cooperating upon reverence and godliness, just as Allah, exalted is He, said, (And cooperate upon reverence and godliness and do not cooperate upon offence and transgression) (5:2).¹⁰⁴

If testing the people by individuals were tolerated in this time to recognize who was from the People of the Sunnah or other than them through this testing, certainly the most deserving and the foremost in that is Shaikh of Islam, muftî of the world, imam of the People of the Sunnah in his time, our shaikh, Shaikh 'Abdul-'Azîz bin 'Abdillâh bin Bâz, who died on 28th of the month of Muḥarram in 1420H—may Allah have mercy on him, forgive him, and reward him generously. [He is] the one who all people recognized for the vastness of his knowledge, the abundance of his benefit, his truthfulness, his gentleness, his tenderness, and his eagerness for the guidance and direction the of the people; we consider him as such and we do not vouch for anyone over Allah. Indeed, he had a unique methodology in calling to Allah, teaching the people the good, and ordering them with the recognized [good] and prohibiting them from the reprehensible [matters]. It was characterized by gentleness and lenience in his advice and his many refutations of others; a correct methodology [that] sets the People of the Sunnah upright and does not oppose them,¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Ibid., (20/164).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., (28/15-16).

¹⁰⁵ From those who were harmed by the arrows of disparagement and resistance from some of those who demand too much (Ar. mutakallifûn), while [having] achieved estimation, direction, and encouragement from the eminent Shaikh 'Abdil-'Azîz bin Bâz ?, are two noble men teaching in the Prophetic Mosque whose lessons are heard on the radio. One of the two,ⁱ the period of his teaching in [the Prophetic mosque] exceeds 50 years; the first time I saw him teaching in it was at the end of Ḥajj on the year 1376H. After Shaikh 'Abdul-'Azîz bin Bâz's transfer from the Presidency of the Islamic University in Madînah to the Presidency of Academic Research and Verdicts in Riyâḍ, every time I met him he ? used to ask me about the lessons in the Prophetic Mosque and the teachers in it, and he would specifically ask about that noble man.

The secondⁱⁱ is occupied with knowledge and concerned with teaching; he teaches in the Prophetic Mosque, in Jeddah and Mecca. I had heard from one of the teachers in the Islamic University in Madînah

encourages them and does not offer resistance against them, lifts them and does not scrutinize them. [It was] a methodology [that] gathers and does not separate, collects and does not rip them apart, directs them and does not scatter them, facilitates and does not make things difficult. How in need are [those] occupied with knowledge and its students of traversing this straight road and tremendous methodology because of what it contains of the bringing about of good for the Muslims and the driving away of harms from them.

The obligation upon those who fell into that testing, the followers and the followed, is that they free [themselves] from this road that [has] divided the People of the Sunnah. Because of it, they showed enmity to one another. That is by the followers leaving the testing and all of whatever results from it of hatred, boycotting, and severance [of mutual relations]; by being brothers, harmonious, cooperating on reverence and godliness; and by the followed freeing [themselves] from this way upon which they were followed and publicize their liberation from it and from the deed of whoever fell into it. With that, the followers are safe from this trial and the followed from the consequence of being followed in this testing and what results from it of harm returning to them and to others.

that he entered Shaikh 'Abdul-'Azîz bin Bâz's ? mosque in Mecca and that noble man was found giving a lesson in the presence of the eminent Shaikh 'Abdul-'Azîz bin Bâz's ? . When the questions regarding the lesson came, Shaikh 'Abdul-'Azîz ? was entrusted with answering them. These two are examples of his estimation, direction, and encouragement for [those who] occupy [themselves] with learning knowledge.

⁹²ⁱ [t] I.e., Shaikh Abū Bakr al-Jazā'irī.

⁹²ⁱⁱ [t] I.e., Shaikh Muḥammad Mukhtâr ash-Shinqîfī.

Cautioning Against the Tribulation From Some of the People of the Sunnah in This Era of Disparaging and Heretication

Close to the heresy of testing the people by individuals is what occurred during this time of a small band from the People of the Sunnah's infatuation with the disparaging and the heretication of some of their brothers from the People of the Sunnah and what resulted from that of boycotting, severance [of mutual relations] between them, and cutting off the path of [deriving] benefit from them. From that disparaging and heretication is what was built upon the assumption that what is not a heresy is a heresy. From the examples of that is that the two honourable shaikhs, 'Abdul-'Azîz bin Bâz ? and Ibn 'Uthaimîn ? had delivered a verdict for a group's entry into a matter, [as] they saw the benefit in that entry. From [those] that [group given] the verdict did not arouse admiration in was that small band, for it reprimanded that group because of that. The matter did not stop at this extent. Rather, the blame transferred to whoever cooperated with it by delivering lectures. He would be described as a diluter for the methodology of the Predecessors—despite [the fact] that these two honourable shaikhs used to deliver lectures to this group by way of telephone.

Also from that is the occurrence of cautioning against attending a person's lessons because he does not speak about such-and-such person or such-and-such group; a person from my pupils at the Faculty of [Islamic] Law at the Islamic University¹⁰⁶ has undertaken the bulk of that. He graduated from it in 1395-1396H and his ranking was 104th from his batch of the 119 graduates.¹⁰⁷ He is not known for being occupied with knowledge, nor do I know of him having

¹⁰⁶ [t] See footnote no. 20. Throughout this portion of his treatise, the shaikh refers to him as 'the disparager' and 'the disparaging pupil'.

¹⁰⁷ This information is conveyed from the books, *Khirrījū al-Jāmi'ah min 'Āmm 1394-95 ilā 1395-96H* and *Dalīl al-Jāmi'ah al-Islamiyyah li-'Āmm 1395-1396H*. Both had been printed during the time which I was the first functionary at the Islamic University. Both contain a foreword from me and are found in my library.

In one of his tapes, for which there is no halter, nor bridle, negation of his being one of my pupils and that he does not remember me entering upon them in the class except for a single time during a waiting period has occurred from this disparaging pupil!!! From the amazing [things] is his recollection of the claimed waiting period and his forgetfulness—or his [feigning] forgetfulness—of the weekly period for jurisprudence during the course of the whole academic year!! At that time, I was doing administrative work in the University. I would attend two lectures in two academic classes during one of the days of the week, then I would return to my administrative work; I did not have any waiting periods. His many colleagues, of the 118 graduates, know this reality and are not ignorant of it.

[any] registered academic lessons, nor [any] writing regarding knowledge, small nor large. The bulk of his merchandise is disparagement, heretication, and cautioning against many from People of the Sunnah. This disparager does not reach the ankles of some of those he disparages because of the abundance of their benefit in their lessons, their lectures, and their writings. The amazement does not cease if a sensible person heard a tape he has containing a recording of a long telephone conversation between Madīnah and Algeria. The questioned eats the flesh of many from the People of the Sunnah in it, while the questioner squanders his wealth without right. In this tape, the number of [those] asked about may add up to thirty individuals: among them the minister, the old and the young, and among them a small band not mourned! Whoever was not asked about in this tape may have been saved from it, while some of those who were saved from it were not saved from other tapes he has, which the internet information includes. The obligation upon him is restraint from eating the flesh of the scholars and students of knowledge. The obligation upon the youth and the students of knowledge is that they do not incline towards those disparagements and heretications that harm and do not benefit and that they occupy [themselves] with beneficial knowledge that returns to them with good and praiseworthy outcome in this world and the Hereafter. In his book, *Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftarī* (pg. 29), Ḥāfiḍh Ibn 'Āsākīr ? had said,

And know—O my brother, may Allah grant us and you success to His pleasure and may He make us from those who dread Him and are godly to Him with the deserved godliness to Him—that the flesh of the scholars, may Allah's mercy be upon them, is poisonous and Allah's custom with regards to tearing the curtains from their shortcomings is known.

In my treatise, *Rifqan Ahl as-Sunnah bi Ahl as-Sunnah*, I had mentioned a large sum of verses, ḥadīths, and narrations, regarding guarding the tongue against backbiting the People of the Sunnah, especially the people of knowledge among them. Despite that, this disparager was not amazed. He described it as not being fit for distribution and he cautioned against it and whoever distributed it. There is no doubt that whoever comes across this disparagement and reads the treatise will find that this ruling is in one valley while the treatise is in another and that the matter is just as the poet said,

The eye may be denied the sun's light due to conjunctivitis,
while the mouth is denied the taste of water due to an illness.

As for the disparaging student's statement for the treatise, *Rifqan Ahl as-Sunnah bi Ahl as-Sunnah*,

So for example, regarding the words that Shaikh 'Abdil-'Azīz bin Bâz's methodology and Shaikh Ibn 'Uthaimīn's methodology are contrary to the methodology of other People of the Sunnah, this is a mistake—no doubt. He means they would not increase the [number of] refutations, while they would refute the opposer. If this is correct, it is contrary to the methodology of the People of the Sunnah and Congregation and, in

reality, is an attack on the two shaikhs and others of whom it is possible that this speech can be said about!!!

the reply to it is from [several] aspects:

The first aspect is that it is not in the treatise that Shaikh 'Abdul-'Azîz bin Bâz ? did not increase the [number of] refutations. Rather, his refutations were many. In the treatise, it has been mentioned on pg. 31

that where the error is clear and evident, the refutation be with gentleness, lenience, and a strong desire for the well-being of the mistaken [person] from the error. One should turn to Shaikh 'Abdul-'Azîz bin Bâz's ? refutations to seek benefit from regarding the way in which the refutation should be.

The second aspect is that I did not consider mentioning Shaikh Ibn 'Uthaimîn's ? methodology regarding refutations, because I do not know of writings, small or large, by him regarding refutations. I asked one of his pupils closely connected to him about that and he informed me that he did not know of anything by him of refutations; that does not defame him, because he was occupied with relating knowledge, distributing it, and writing.

The third aspect is that Shaikh 'Abdil-'Azîz bin Bâz's ? methodology differed from the methodology of the disparaging student and those who resemble him, because the shaikh's methodology was characterised by gentleness, lenience, and the desire for benefiting the one being advised, helping him to the path of safety. As for the disparager and whoever resembles him, then they are characterised by severity, alienation, and cautioning. Many of those whose disparagement is in his tapes were commended and called to by Shaikh 'Abdul-'Azîz. He would urge them upon calling [to Allah] and teaching the people and he would urge upon benefiting from them and taking [knowledge] from them.

In short, I did not attribute the lack of refutation of others to Shaikh 'Abdil-'Azîz bin Bâz ? . As for Ibn 'Uthaimîn, then I did not turn [my attention] to him with [any] mention regarding the affair of refutations. What the disparager mentioned does not correspond to what is in the treatise and it is the clearest of evidences for his stumbles and his lack of verification. If this was from him in written words, then how is the situation for which there is no writing?!

As for the statement of the treatise's disparager,

In reality, I have read the treatise and I recognized the position of the People of the Sunnah regarding it. Hopefully, you have seen the refutations from some of the scholars and shaikhs—and I do not think the refutations will stop at that. There are certainly those who will also refute, because it is just as the poet says:

Shaqîq came displaying his spear;
surely, among your cousins are spears,¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ [t] See <http://www.salaftalk.net/st/viewmessages.cfm?Forum=23&Topic=2078&srow=21&erow=40> (accessed Feb. 29, 2008).

as such: [he wrote] ‘displayer’ (), while what is correct is ‘displaying’ ().¹⁰⁹

So the reply is that those who he meant by “the People of the Sunnah” are those whose methodology differs from Shaikh 'Abdil-'Azîz's methodology, which I will point out shortly. With these words, he seeks to incite the determinations of whoever does not know them to discredit the treatise after he incited whoever knows them. In reality, I did not display a spear. On the contrary, I offered an advice, of which the disparager and whoever resembles him did not accept, because the advice for the advised resembles the remedy for the disease. From the ailing are those who use the remedy even if it was bitter because of what is hoped of [some] benefit, while from the advised are those who are turned away from the advice by desire, not accepting it. Rather, they caution against it. I ask Allah to grant the people success, guidance, and security from the devil's deception and deceit.

Three [people] have joined the disparaging student: two in Makkah and Madînah,¹¹⁰ both from my students in the Islamic University in Madînah. The first of them graduated in 1384-1385H and the second in 1391-1392H. As for the third,¹¹¹ then [he is] in the extreme south of the country. The second and the third have described whoever distributes the treatise as being a heretic¹¹² and this is wholesale and general heretication. I do not know or not if they know that it is distributed by the scholars and students who are not characterized by [any] heresy. I expect to be supplied with the observations from them upon which they built this general heretication—if they exist—for further examination.

Shaikh 'Abdur-Rahman as-Sudais, the imam and preacher of the Sacred Mosque, has a sermon [which was] delivered from the Sacred Mosque's pulpit. In it, he cautioned against the People of the Sunnah's battling one another. We should turn the sights to it, for surely it is important and useful.

I ask Allah ﷻ that He grant the people success for what He is pleased with, for comprehension of the religion, firmness upon the truth, and distraction from what does not concern by what concerns. Surely, He is the Patron of that and the [One] capable of it. May Allah send salutations, peace, and blessings upon our Prophet Muhammad, upon his family and companions.

¹⁰⁹ [t] Shaikh 'Abdul-Muḥsin is criticizing a grammar mistake Shaikh Fâliḥ al-Ḥarbî made in the original Arabic for this line of poetry: he wrote the word 'ârîḍ () in the nominative case when he should have written it in the accusative case (). I have translated the line according to its proper meaning as otherwise, it would not have made sense.

¹¹⁰ [t] I.e., Shaikhs Rabî' bin Hâdî al-Madkhalî and 'Ubaid bin 'Abdillâh al-Jâbirî, respectively.

¹¹¹ [t] I.e., Shaikh Aḥmad bin Yahyâ an-Najmî.

¹¹² [t] See the same URL as found in footnote no. 100 to find these statements by Shaikhs 'Ubaid and Aḥmad.